

Sharana Kathamanjari

AKKAMAHADEVI

Smt. G. V. Jaya Rajasekhar
Tr. Dr. Vijaya Subbaraj







Sharana Kathamanjari

AKKAMAHADEVI

Kannada by

G.V. Jaya Rajasekhar

English by

Dr. Vijaya Subbaraj



BASAVA SAMITHI

Basava Bhavan, Basaveshwara Road
Bangalore-560 001

AKKAMAHADEVI

Kannada by **G.V. Jaya Rajasekhar**

English by **Dr. Vijaya Subbaraj**

Published by **Basava Samithi**

Basava Bhavan, Basaveshwara Road

Bangalore-560 001

Pages : viii+40

First Edition : 2006

© Basava Samithi

Price : **Rs. 25/-**

DTP by

VARSHINI GRAPHICS

Bangalore-40. ☎ : 23402575

Printed at

SNEHA PRINTERS

No. 114, 4th Cross, B.C.C. Layout

Attiguppe, Vijayanagar 2nd Stage, Bangalore-40

☎ : 080-30972467, 23392814

E-Mail-snehaprinters@gmail.com

karthikenterprises@gmail.com

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Basava Samithi since its inception (1964) under the dynamic presidentship of Dr. B.D. Jatti, the former Vice-President of India, has disseminated eternal message of Basava and other Sharanas throughout. "Basava Patha", Kannada monthly; "Basava Journal" English quarterly; "Basava Marg" Hindi quarterly; "Basava Padam" Tamil quarterly; "Basava Patha" Marathi quarterly; "Basava Patham" Telugu quarterly have successfully propagating the human values of Basava at state, country and international level.

More than one hundred books have been published in Kannada, English, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam and other languages to spread the message of Basavanna and other Sharanas throughout the world.

All the vachanas of Basavanna have been translated to different languages. Basava Samithi has a plan to publish two thousand selected vachanas of all Sharanas, which represent the whole Vachana literature and they will be translated to several other languages.

The 108 Vachanas of five important Sharanas (i.e. Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna,

Siddharama and Akkamahadevi) were published in pocket edition. Thousands of copies were sold within a short time. Efforts are made to get these selected Vachanas translated in different languages to make them available to common people outside the State also.

Keeping in mind the school children "**Sharana Katha Manjari**", a new project was started. These works are written in simple and lucid language. Efforts are made to get these books translated to English and Hindi.

Dr. Vijaya Subbaraj, renowned writer and retired professor has successfully translated the life sketch of **Akkamahadevi** written by Smt. G.V. Jaya Rajashekhar, in Kannada. On behalf of Basava Samithi, I thank Prof. Vijaya Subbaraj for her translation work. I thank the office bearers of Samithi for their encouragement and finally I thank M/s Sneha Printers for their neat printing.

Date 14-1-2006

Arvind Jatti

Bangalore-01

President, Basava Samithi

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In Vachana literature, Akkamahadevi has a unique place. She was not only a saint poetess but was a great mystic. When one thinks from women's point of view, she was a rebel and an embodiment of women's emancipation. She threw off worldly entanglements and took to vairagya. All through her life, she struggled against conservative society, denied worldly marriage and determined communion with her divine lover Chennamallikarjuna whom she considered as her husband ever since her childhood.

All Saranas of 12th century including the great Bhakthi Bhandhari Basavanna and great mystic Allama Prabhu, revered her for her height of achievement in metaphysical experience spiritual knowledge, poetic compositions. Hers was Madhura Bhakthi, which aptly suited the concept of 'Sarana sati and Linga pathi'.

Whenever we think of Vachanas, we immediately recall Basavanna among men and Akkamahadevi among women. Mahadevi is the cuckoo in the forest of Vachanas. With her rich and melodious voice she called 'Amarthya' to this world.

Mahadeviyakka has a special place as the first woman poet of Kannada literature. In addition to vachanas, she

has written 'Yoganga Thrividhi', Sristiya Vachana, Manthragopya, which though contain serious metaphysical thoughts, they are conveyed successfully through crystal form of 'thrividhis' (very small compositions)

Akkamahadevi was very bold and very original in her thoughts. She preferred Yoga to worldly pleasures and even queen hood. Through her Sandhana, Atmanusandhana (self exploration) she reached the pinnacle of Siddhi and became 'Yogini'.

Smt. JayaRajashekhar G.V. while portraying Akkamahadevi in this Saranakatha Manjari series has taken all the care to provide substantial information in a very simple style so as to reach the larger group of readers. While giving biographical details Mrs. Jaya Rajashekhar here and there has provided personal comments on Akkamahadevi's achievements and personality. She also has supplemented this life sketch with Akka's Vachanas to know and understand better.

It is really a great pleasure for me to translate Jaya's book. I have been true to the original as far as possible. Hope my translation would be as readable as original one.

My sincere thanks to Basava Samithi for involving me into this translation venture and providing me an opportunity to know my capacity to translate.

-Dr. Vijaya Subbaraj

AKKAMAHADEVI

Malanad is a beautiful place. Beautiful rivers, falls, plants, trees, creepers, mountain ranges, thick green forests have added beauty to this land. Uduthadi a village is situated in shimoga which is central point of this land.

800-900 years ago there lived a couple. Who were called sumathi and Nirmala shetty. These were ardent devotees of Shiva. Though they were married for long years, they had no children. They had all the comforts, but no children. This made them unhappy. To beget a child, they prayed and worshipped God sincerely. Yet there was no sign of god's blessings.

They vowed to Guddada mallaiah, as a result sumathi conceived. Nirmala felt very happy. Unlike others, they prayed for a daughter and not for a son.

In expectation of a child, they fed the poor with food, distributed clothes, served the saranas.

On a full moon day, according to the wish of the couple, a daughter was born to them. They considered

the child as shiva prasada. They arranged for the naming ceremony, and invited all relatives, friends, and neighbours.

They bathed the child with sacred water with which the feet of saranas was washed. Bejewelled the child with gem studded ornaments. Adorned the child's fore head with Vibhuthi. They named the child as Mahadavi as per their wish.

The child grew up into pretty girl. They looked after the child very well. She was treated as apple of their eyes.

Mahadevi was very clever, she was always much ahead of others. She never accepted anything blindly. She would question, argue and only when convinced,, she would believe. She also found a worthy guru who guided her in all aspects. She mastered Kannada, Sanskrit languages. She studied many sastra granthas.

As her parents were highly devoted. She also imbibed Bhakthi in her. She was highly religious and philosophic right from her childhood. She was very different from all girls of her age. No mundane desires, likings could touch her. She developed interest and bhakthi in Sri shaila mallikarjuna, and gradually started believing that he was her most loved and revered God all her life.

Mahadevi turned into youth. Now the beauty multiplied hundred times. She was considered the most beautiful damsel in and around that place. Parents were worried as whom to get as bridegroom for her?

Parents were worried about her marriage. But she had considered mallikarjuna the most loved god as her life partner. She enjoyed communion with him in dreams; suffered pangs of separation, floating in a world of devotion, She lost herself.

Whenever she was in the company of friends, while chitchating, occasionally marriage issue would shoot up. On such occasion, if friends asked her for fun, that whom would she marry, she would describe her would be husband as follows:

Oh dears! I loved a man who is beautiful
whom death cannot touch no one can destroy
no place, no end, no signs
such is the handsome one I loved friends!
He has no bhava. no fear, fearlessly handsome
Boundless with no boundaries
I loved immensely the husband
like chennamallikarjuna.

All her friends when heard this description, were astonished! They felt pity for her, for they knew that it is highly impossible to get a man of her description and imagination.

They advised her not to be with such imagination and ambition, and marry a suitable boy of this world.

But Mahadevi laughed derisively at their advice and tried to convince saying.

Peacock will not dance on mounds but hills.
Swans wish for ponds not for pools
Cuckoo will never sing unless mango
tree sprouts.

Bees will not be drawn to flowers
Which have no scent
I wish for my God chennamallikarjuna
and not for others

You know my friends!

So saying, she fell into trance. Her friends got scared. But mean while she woke up from trance and again started describing her dream.

Oh! sister, I saw a dream
Rice, supari, ear rings co-conut all I saw
I saw a gorava with tiny plaits Shiny teeth
Coming to my house for alms
Enamoured I followed him and held his hand
Seeing chennamallikarjuna, I opened my eyes.

She suffered pangs of seperation. To the world, she appeared strange and abnormal. To her friends, She was mad. They thought, if she is married fast, she may become normal and alright. and give up this mad kind of behaviour. They decided to inform her parents. But when they were trying for her marriage, to their surprise. She told them that she is already married:

"How can I have a husband
for this world and one for
world beyond?

One husband for mundane life?
One for spiritual life?
Other than my husband chennamallikarjuna
all other men are puppets behind clouds"

-She was determined. Hence frankly replied, and stuck to her decision.

Parents were deeply worried about her marriage. They wanted their daughter to be happy and comfortable like all others. Who will not wish for happy married life for their daughters? But whenever they raised marriage issue, the daughter would come out with some answer.

"I saw a radiant divine form
in my eyes and I was lost.
Gem studded crown, serpent
Jewelled, cheerful face
Shiny teeth. I saw and lost
myself of him."
Thus chennamallikarjuna was
bride groom
I the bride, listen to me mother"

-She would say thus. She lost interest in food, sleep, wear. She would always be lost in thoughts. When they bought her new clothes and jewels to please her, she would not wear them.

"The sacred washed water of guru's
Feet is sacred bath for me
Vibhuthi is the haldi for me
Nudily is the silken wear for me

The dust of the feet of shivabhakthas
is the smear for the body
Rudrakshi is the jewel for me.
Foot wear of saranas is basiga for my head.
Why I need other sringara when
I am the bride of chennamallikarjuna"

Declaring thus, she expressed her love towards
vairagya.

While this was the situation, an incident happened,
and her whole life changed. King of that place called
Kaushika, was handsome, young, and was also a
Rasika (delightfull) Once, while returning from hunting
expedition, sitting on an elephant back, had a glimpse
of Mahadevi who was standing in the balcony, chatting
with her friends. He was astonished at her natural
beauty. Returning to palace, he was immersed in her
thoughts. He felt deep desire to marry her.

Waiting for the dawn, he sent his people to enquire
about the lady whom he saw. They returned with all the
details. They told him that she was the daughter of great
shiva bhakthas, sumathi and Nirmala setty of uduthadi.

He wondered at not knowing about them though
they belonged to his place. His decision to marry her
became still firm.

He thought in himself- 'In the authority of a king'.
If sent for her she may be offended and also she may

be angry, and may spoil my name. Hence I must first convince her and then marry. With this thought, he called some of his family members and asked them to mediate.

According to the King's wishes they all went to Nirmal's house.

Though Nirmala was surprised at their unexpected arrival, he treated them well. He asked the reason for their visit with all humility and with little timidity.

"Sir, you have a very good chance. you are very lucky. Our king likes your daughter, get your daughter married to him and become relatives of the royal family" they said this with delight.

These words did not please the couple. Instead they felt as though treading on fire. Immediately they said, Sir, how is it possible? we are shiva bhaktas. We cannot give our daughter to a king who is not shiva bhakta'.

When king is asking their daughter in marriage, they are refusing! What fools they might be!-

They thought in themselves and said "stop your foolishness. Fulfill the desire of the king. can you go against his wish and survive? simply agree for the marriage. Your daughter will become the queen and she will live a happy life. From all angles, if she is

married, you will be at gain. -with these words, they advised him.

Nirmala was in a fix. "Will any one bargain a servant for mother? falling for mundane pleasures, if odd relationship is established, one can never escape hell! what the king can do with us?' -he thought, he told the people from palace- Sirs, Mahadevi is not a child, I shall ask for her consent if she agrees, we have no objection to marry her to your king -saying this, for the time being,, he avoided the problem.

Even they thought it convincing. They returned to Mahadevi, described the beauty, riches, valour, name, fame of the king before her and asked for her consent. They even explained her in slightly threatening tone- If you dont consent for marriage your parents will be in trouble. This is unexpected luck coming to your doorstep, dont send back the fortune (Lakshmi)

Mahadevi smiled cleverly and said- If your king really wants me to marry him, he should himself come to me and promise me to fulfill my wish.

Members of the royal family were so happy to believe that Mahadevi agreed for the marriage and returned to the palace, told everything to the king.

The king started dreaming of his marriage with Mahadevi. He immediately started to go. He dressed himself with costly clothes and expensive jewellery and

left to Nirmala's house riding on an elephant. The servants and maids carried costly Jewellery and clothes to be given to Mahadevi.

The people of the neighbourhood, noticing the arrival of the king and his family members, came and assembled. King with royal dignity entered the house of Nirmala setty and saw Mahadevi. When he saw her from close he was further enamoured by her natural beauty. His desire multiplied.

King was not the type to force a woman." Oh lady? you tell me boldly what you have in mind. Only then I think of your love. If I fail in this I shall go through the same punishment meted out to those who tell lies, who enjoy being cruel to creatures, who breaks relationship between mother and children, faithless to friends, biting ears, miser and so on. You tell me your desire in mind. I shall fulfil that and then I shall marry you. I want you to come to me with your own will- he politely spoke thus.

"Oh! king If you fulfill what I say, I agree for this marriage. The minute you deny my wish, I shall leave you."- Mahadevi said.

The king, in great hurry said "Mahadevi tell me what you want. Costly Jewels? Servants, Big palace? My entire kingdom and treasury is yours. I am only your servant. Tell me what should I do for you." In a loving tone all this was said next.

"Oh! king! I don't want anything of this. I want you to become Shivabhakta Nothing else I need. When

you remain as 'Bhavi' I cannot marry you. This is what I want." The minute, King heard these words his entire enthusiasm vanished.

"We have no time for shivabhakthi" When the king said this, Mahadevi said then I cannot be with you. Now I am free from bondage- saying this, she immediately threw up her wears, left all pleasures, luxuries, parents, friends, People of the place, covered herself with long thick hairy blanket and started off.

Parents felt deep sorrow to see their young girl leaving everything and going. They were very much concerned. They enquired about her hunger and thirst. Then Mahadevi told them the following:

If I feel hungry, I can beg.

If I feel thirsty ponds and pools are there

If I feel cold cast away clothes are there

To sleep there are dilapidated temples

Chennamallikarjuna, you are there for the company.

-Continuing with these words. She walked further.

The friends of Mahadevi were unhappy to see her determination. A woman in such youth, if leaves home and stays, she will be subjected to hard comments and criticism. So they tried to make her withdraw her decision. But again she had the answer.

"Having built a house on a hill top

why fear wild creatures?

Having built a house on the seashore

why fear the waves?

having built a house in a market place
why fear the noise?

Oh! Lord! chennamallikarjuna

having born in this world
Without resentment one must bear the
praises and accusations
calm and composed

-Saying this she walked with firm footsteps.

At that time Basavanna, the son of Madarasa, Madalambika of Bagevadi was the minister in the court of Bijjala. He was considered Bhakti Bandari 'Anubhava mantapa which was established by him was the centre of meta physical learning. All those who were interested in philosophy could come there and participate.

In this 'Anubhava mantapa there was no difference and discrimination of caste, creed, and sex. Any body could participate in the religious and philosophic discussion. All Lingadharis were welcomed here. seekers of knowledge from all over India came there; pursued some kind of Kayaka (work) and participated in discussions. Allamaprabhu was the chairperson of that Mantapa.

Mahadevi wanted to leave for Kalyana. So she travelled towards that. It was not an easy path for a beautiful young woman. She must have looked a fool to have rejected the status of a queen.

She became a victim of comments. She faced problems from the sex mongers. Though she felt tired of hunger and thirst she did not care. With her determination, she reached kalyana.

She felt happy the minute she stood on the earth of Kalyana. This is because Basavanna belonged to this place. This was the place where saranas practiced what they preached and lived there! This was the place where all blind beliefs were thrown away; struggled for the overall development of humanity. This was the place where courageous people who braved to bring in social change and started a movement, and lived! glimps of the place itself thrilled her!

She arrived at Anubhava mantapa. Basavanna who had learnt about her arrival earlier, welcomed her as welcoming his own mother. He introduced her to prabhudeva and other saranas who had assembled.

It was Just a formal programme of Introduction. Allama prabhu also had hailed from Balligave, a neighbouring village of uduthadi. These two were the precious Jewels gifted to spiritual world and literary world by malanad.. Mahadevi was not new to prabhudeva. They were familiar.

Prabhu questioned her in many ways. Though he appeared questioning hard, his intention was to expose her knowledge. He wanted everyone to know and see

the light of shivagnana which she had in her. Mahadevii also wanted to revise her knowledge through such arguments and discourses.

She answered all the questions coming one after the other from prabhu. Without any hesitation and fear. she answered all the questions combining every body, with humility and obedience. Allama prabhu, Basavanna, Chennabasavanna. Siddaramaiah, Madivala machideva and all others praised her immensely. Now Mahadevi was Mahadevi Akka for every one.

Scholars believe the arguments between prabhudeva and Akkamahadevi are equal to upanishads.

She stayed in the company of saranas of Kalyana for some time; participated in ghostis. She learnt from prabhu her real place of belonging that is the 'Aaikya sthala'. She took farewell from sarana banadhus and left towards Sri saila.

She went through difficult path, climbed the Sri saila giri and reached 'Kadalivana'. The shiva vadhu (shiva's bride) who had seen her bridegroom in 'Nirakara' (invisible) state, now longed to see him in physical form sakara.

From her childhood, she had worshipped him, loved him. It was strange to believe her saying hand

som who had no form! not subjected to death! she wanted communion with him. Finally she achieved Aaikya with him and felt gratified.

Like life history of any other Sarana, Mahadevi's is also not known clearly. But yet something could be said about her.

Vachana literature is its own. No imitation and influence of any other language and literature. when ever we think of Vachanas, Immediately we recall Basavanna among men and Akkamahadevi among women. Mahadevi is the cuckoo in the forest of Vachanas. It is the first rich voice calling 'Amarthya' (who does not belong) to this world (human)

Though there is the mention of Kanthi who suppose to have composed poems in competitions, we have no clear proof of her existence. Hence Mahadeviyakka is the first woman poet of Kannada literature.

Yoganga thrividhi, Sristiya vachana, manthragopya are her works.

'Yoganga thrividhi', in the thripadi form describes shivayoga in brief. What ever spiritual experience she had, seen, and linganga samarasya concept, is conveyed in a very pleasing form. The book also has shatsthalas of veerasaiva religion, beautifully narrated.

The science of yoga is not easily accessible to all./ When one understands the images, symbols, will be taken aback! deep knowledge of shivayoga is embedded in a small crystal form of Thripadi.

In these thripadis, one can see the transitional period where in Amshagana was changing into mathragana. deep meaning is conveyed in a very simple way in these thrividhis. The work is adorable because of its pleasing style of folk.

But however Akka's greatness is discernable more in vachanas. The available Vachanas of mahadevi are 354 in nos. These Vachanas have 'chennamallikarjuna' as Ankitha or pen name. Her Vachanas are considered great and special because of their rich emotional content.

No woman other than Akkamahadevi has reached this spiritual height. She is bold and very original in her thoughts. She refused the queen hood and took to Sadhana. Gave up all worldly pleasures and attachments; learnt yoga. Through her Sadhana, Atmanusandhana (self exploration) reached the Pinnacle of siddi; became 'Yogini'.

Her vairagya was not because she had dearth of any comfort or luxury. Every thing was easily available, but yet she rejected, took liking to Shivayoga. When there was choice between two things -wordly pleasures,

freedom of thought- she chose freedom of thought. She was the first one to blow the trumpet of woman's liberation.

According to some puranas, Mahadevi was married to Kaushika. She lived with him for some time. But because of disharmony between wife and husband and Kaushika over looking the conditions laid down by her, she left him. But according to some literary works, she was not married. She did not agree to live a life with 'bhabvi' Hence she had to leave home as viragini (who has left everything) Some say that she was totally in the Nirvana state (naked) and others say, she was covered with hair. This doesn't mean, the hairs of her head but hairy cloth made of hair from animals. Viragis were in the habit of covering with this kind of cloth (Kambali)

We are lack of historical sense. Hence we do not get exact and true information about saranas, santhas and yogis. Later who ever writes about them, will glorify their life. and some go to the extent of portraying as avataras (incarnated persons) and create strange stories around them as they fancy. The result of which the truth is distorted or totally covered or clouded.

What ever may be the case of Akkamahadevi, may be she has come through many difficult tests, her vachanas convey abundant knowledge. Sahaja Shivayoga. Soonya thathva- Sarana sathi, lingapathi bhava, sakara, Nirakara thathva all these described in

an essence form. One can rarely find like Akka, utilising nature for images. She was very clever enough to exploit the beauty of malanad to provide poetic delight in her compositions.

Akka's Vachanas are rich in emotional content, musicality, poetic beauty, brevity, completeness, meaning, pleasing word structure, ornamental language. Because of all these features they are highly pleasing musical compositions or lyrics.

Her Vachanas are sweet honey like, which simultaneously provide taste to the tongue and strength to the body. The study of Vachanas would give enlightenment as well delight to the mind.

Either to preach morals, deep spiritual theories, concepts, Bhakthi, Jnana, Vairagya or any other thathvas, was not the intention of her vachanas. These may be occasionally seen here and there but never a main objective of her vachanas.

Her main intention was not to be the propounder of any religious sect to contemplate on divine love. while communicating her intention of uniting with Shiva, thathvarthas might have appeared. But then also they were never dry. They are the delightful expressions of lingasamasara.

Mahadevi, what ever she suffered, struggled and faced, after leaving home and her place, has been expressed in vachanas like Bettada melondu....

'Chandanava Kadidu Koredu'... Ariyadavarodane sangava madidode, Nondavara nova Noyadavaretha ballaru and other such vachanas.

In Vachanas like 'Harane ninenage gandanaga bekendu' Guruve thethiganada and others, she has equated anga samsara with lingasamsara. She has compared lingadeeksha incident with worldly marriage. This seems unparalleled comparison.

'Sudali virahava'

'Kichillada begeyalli bendenavva' and many other like the ones above shows her pangs of seperation from shiva.

'Sakara, Nirakara thathva is explained through gattituppa, tiliduppa.' In the vachana, 'Vanavella nive, vanadolagana devatharuvella neeve' what ever she experienced the creation around has been conveyed.

'Vanavella kalpatharu, gidavella

"Eele, nimbe, mavu, Madala...

"Lokada chestege ravi beejavadanthe'

....and other Vachanas highlight scientific truth.

"Aharava kiridu madiranna' Vachana talks about the health concern.

In the vachana, Savillada, kedillada roohillada cheluvange... mystic vision is noticeable.

Her humility, obedience, respect for elders are seen in the following Vachanas, like

"Basavannana maneya magalagi" "Beledenu asankhyathara Karunadolage and others. These also guide us how to be free from ego and pride.

'Alisankulave, mamarave, beludingale' 'Chilimiliyendaduva giligalira' and other such vachanas are heart rendering. Obsessed with love, she sings songs of seperation. These vachanas are equal in greatness, grandeur to the erotic poetry of the world. Great poets of Kannada, describe Akka's such Vachanas as 'sea of vipralambha Sringara'

Many may ask, she having renounced the world, what message could she give to the common people?

Mahadeviyakka and other saranas, Saranes, never turned away from this worldly life. They were all married, they considered married life also as 'yoga' like Sanyasa. They respected family life and lived it. Few sought vairagya, but that was their personal. They never preached vairagya. It was the same with Mahadevi Akka.

There is one Vachana.

Havina halla Kaledu havanadisa ballade, havina sangave lesu kandayya.

In this, Akka says, when one knows how to extract teeth of the serpent and live with it without any fear, one can live with this samsara. To do sadhana, Atma needs Anga. When one gives up thinking of self and attachment to it, the Anga which has sheltered atma

looks after atma as loving mother. But on the contrary, If the self' is not abandoned, the Anga will turn into devil. In a very simple and convincing way, she has explained, the relationship between 'Anga' and 'Atma' in this physical world.

In another vachana,

Huttide Sree guruvina hasthadalli beledenu asankhya thara karuna dolage' also there is a message for the common people of this world.

She is capable of capturing the entire scene in one single Vachana, like this. In this composition there are tips for mother, father, bride, bridegroom, The comparison between laukika samsara, paramarthika samsara is really astonishing and praise worthy. All the truth contained in this has universal and eternal value. She has spoken about Ahimsa (Nonviolence), in the Vachana, 'Jalagaranobba Jalava hokku shodhisi halavu pranigala kondu nalinalidhaduva'

In Anubhava mantapa during her spiritual arguments, the answers, the thoughts, revealed her heights of knowledge and spiritual experience. There is hardly any one who has not been impressed. She has a special place in the history of kannada literature. one has to enjoy for himself. No words can explain the beauty of her lyrics. The same meaning is conveyed in this following vachana.

"Nallalu Nallana sukhava Aruhuvale ballade adara therananthe Lingasukha. ballidaru usuruware!"

The happy experience of lovers cannot be explained to others. same is the state of experience with linga. Even if you know the extent of happiness, you cannot tell others.

The relationship between jeeva -parama is as deep as the love between lovers. One can experience the happiness but cannot be explained to others. on the whole, in Akka's vachanas one can see three things together poetry, anubhava (meta physical experience) and love. This is the reason, that she has been placed very high among vachanakaras. Chennabasavanna in one of his vachanas has glorified her greatness, he says in the vachana).

'Adyara aravathu vachana...' sixty vachanas of Adyaru (early vachanakaras) are equal to twenty vachanas of Dannayakas, twenty vachanas of dannayakas equal to ten vachanas of prabhu deva; These ten are equal to five vachanas of Ajaganna, these five vachanas in turn equal to one single vachana of Akka. This shows how great her vachanas are. This is the highest compliment one could pay to her!

Soonya Simhasanadeeswara Allama prabhu, having acknowledged the height of Akka's personality and achievement, he created respectable place for women in the field of religion, literature. They were allowed to enjoy equal status with men in society. Basavanna and other Saranas and rationalists paid

respects; offered salutations at the feet of Akkamahadevi.

M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy a great scholar, who considered vachanas as upanishads in Kannada, has complimented Mahadeviyakka in the following words.

"Mahadeviyakka's life is a great example of woman's achievement, woman's liberation, and spiritual achievement"

None of us have seen Mahadeviyakka but yet through her vachanas we can imagine her personality and achievement and can have a glimpse of her inner self.

We will be thrilled to see appealing, tender hearted, young, beautiful lady. Full moon day of spring season (chaitra month) was her birth day. what she achieved within such short span is amazing to imagine! Such thing is possible only to people like Mahadeviyakka.

Hers is the first voice in Kannada singing melodiously, the songs of 'Madhura bhakti' she being here on this earth, she called to Amarthya shiva (Invisible shiva) with her rich and bold voice.

We wish that women folk with rational thinking aiming to achieve some thing great, pursuing and treading the path of sadhana, shall be born in this sacred land of Karnataka.

Selected Vachanas of Mahadeviyakka

Oh lord! I cannot bring into comparison
The happiness I felt in the company of
Your saranas

Oh lord! It is better to die than
bear separation after meeting
Your Mahanthas.

Chenna mallikarjuna I cannot
live leaving those great men
Who showed me the way to you.

2

Oh Lord! sacred is the place where
Your Saranas tread

Oh Lord! that place is Kailasa where
Your saranas live.

Oh Lord! that is the real habitat
Where your Saranas stay.

Chennamallikarjuna the place is
a pilgrimage where Basavanna stays
My salutations to the sacred feet of Basavanna

3

Oh Lord! my cataract is gone
Since I saw sajjana sadbhakthas
Oh lord! since, I bowed to the feet
of these sajjana sadbhakthas

My fate is erased
Chennamallikarjuna,
Seeing the feet of your sangana
Basava
I was saluting, saluting

4

No use searching tired; no use wishing
No use aspiring, no use going into deep
penance.
What ever must happen, will happen
in time.
Without the wish of Shiva. there can
be no success.
It is the grace of chennamallikarjuna,
that I could see the holy feet of
Sangana Basavanna and feel sanctified

5

If I want to please you with Astavidharchane
You are far from being extrovert
If I want to please you with meditation
You are far beyond mind and manthra
If I want to please you with counting
beads and praises
You are far beyond sound (Nada)
If I want to please you with knowledge
of thought
You are far beyond intelligence.
If I want to hold you in the centre of
my lotus heart.
You are a complete man
I cannot please you chennamallikarjuna
It is better you please me

6

Oh bees! Oh mango tree
Oh moon light! Oh cuckoo!
I pray you all to tell me and show
If you have seen my lord chennamallikarjuna
And show me where he is

7

Playing; singing
talking; listening
walking; speaking
my hearty get together is with
your saranas.
Chennamallikarjuna as long
as I live
The years granted to me,
I spend all days with them.

8

Reduce eating; reduce eating
Eating too much leads to illness
Eating leads to sleep; sleep leads
to lethargy
Ignorance, forget fulness
Ignorance increases disturbance
of mind and produces
Kayavikara, mano vikara, Indriya vikara
Bhavavikara, vayu vikara
Which all unite to create body
Hence too much of care for the body
will be the cause for death
Is not subtle body enough for
Japa, thapa, dhyana, dharana?
It is an hurdle to nurture body
for the state of Ascet

Too much of care for body leads
to thamasa which in turn destroys
Virakthi through ignorance.
Knowledge lost; para (ultimate)
becomes unreachable
Dont let the body which is meant for
Chennamallikarjuna to go waste

9

Body will not exist without senseorgans
Sense organs will not exist without body
How can you call Nikhami, Nirdhoshi
If you accept, I will be happy
If you do not accept I will be the sufferer.
Chenna Mallikarjuna.

10

Who has watered sour the plants
And trees of mango, madala, lime and eele
Who has watered sweet the sugarcane
Banana and Jack fruit
Who has watered paddy and grains?
Who has watered scent the plants of
maruga, mallige, pachche, mudivala
All the waters are one and the same.
But expressed differently with different combinations
What if my lord chennamallikarjuna
is present in all places
He is yet so different in himself.

11

Remember shiva! Remember shiva
Before your life is measured by
the vessels of morning and evening
And exhausted you will not
get back your spent life

Remembering shiva, the sinners
Who had committed pancha
Maha pathakas attained salvation.

12

When there is the fragrance of breath
Who bother for flowers?
When there is kindness, peace, patience and
pardon
Why bother for samadhi?
When one becomes the whole world itself
Why bother for solitude, chennamallikarjuna?
Why question me I am a puppet of
Mudane world?
Vessel of illusion abode of birth and death?

14

Break my pride of Maya
dispel the darkness of body
stop the struggle of life
Oh my god! free me from the
entanglement of this world
Chennamallikarjuna I pray thee

15

What use knowing everything?
unless one knows oneself
When one knows oneself
Why ask others?
Chennamallikarjuna, as I could
Know you earlier
I had the knowledge of you
through you my lord!

16

To feed this body, I entered the forest
I begged each plant and tree
But they gave for their Linga
I begged and turned Bhavi
They offered and turned Bhakthas
I swear chennamallikarjuna,
I will never beg for self

17

Once I beg the cupid
Once again beg the moon humbly
let go this viraha (pain of seperation)
whom shall I lose courage?
Because of chennamallikarjuna
I had to be obligated to all.

18

Reading veda ended in arguments
Listening sastras ended in doubts
Claiming that you know Agama got exhausted.
Claiming you have completed
Puranas were Left behind
Where am I? Where is he?
Chennamallikarjuna Brahma is all void

19

Seeing guru and elders is the
jewel for the eyes.
Listening to the music of purathanas
is the jewel for the ears
speaking truth is the jewel for vachana.
Good words of sadbhakthas is
the jewel for discourses.

Giving to the deserving is the
Jewel for hands
Discussion with shivaganas is the
Jewel for living life
What is the use of this existence
Chennamallikarjuna if you don't
have all these?

20

Kadali is body; Kadali is mind
Kadali is the sense organs
Kadali is Bhava, the terrifying forest
Vanquished such kadali, came alive
And saw the Kadali grove
the lord protector of the world
"You my child, conquered the world!
this he said and praised and took me
Kindly and embraced.
I found my self in the lotus of his heart

21

Who can dare enter kalyana?
No not possible?
unless, desire, temptations are shunned
One cannot step into Kalyana
One must be chaste and pure
inside and outside
To enter Kalyana.
unless you are free from 'you'
You cannot know kalyana
I love chennamallikarjuna
Shunned the shyness
Now I see Kalyana and pay respects

22

Looking and staring I closed my eyes
Listening and Listening, I lost myself
Never bothered the beds spread
I forget what I am in the thought of uniting
with my lord chennamallikarjuna

23

Kama, (cupid) was thought great
he was burnt to ashes.
Kala (Time) was thought great
but he was trampled
Oh mother, listen to, oh mother'.
Brahma was thought great
but he was nipped in the head
Vishnu was thought great
but he was made to tend the cattle.
The fort of Thripura was thought great
But he burnt-it-in flames from
the eye on his forehead
This is the reason that chennamallikarjuna
is my husband
I cannot describe the feeling of
greatness of the reward of freedom
from birth and death

24

Maya haunted the body as shadow
Maya hanted the soul as mind
Maya haunted the memory as consciousness
Maya haunted the crowd of this world
With a cane held behind
Oh lord chennamallikarjuna
No one can conquer Maya created by you.

25

Oh Lord! I was burnt in fire without flames
Oh Lord! I suffered the pains of wounds without
visible wounds.
Oh Lord! suffered anxiety without happiness
Oh! Loving chennamallikarjuna, I had to come
through all forbidden births

26

Peacocks will not dance on mounds but hills
swans wish for ponds not for pools.
Cuckoo will never sing unless mango tree
sprouts
Bees will not be drawn to flowers
Which have no scent
I wish for my lord chennamallikarjuna
and not for others
You know my friend!

27

Guru was the mediator
Linga was bridegroom. I the bride
countless people in this world were
my parents
They married me to a suitable boy
Hence chennamallikarjuna is my husband
I have no relationship with any
Other in this world.

28

Even if chandana (sandal) is cut and ground
It will not leave its scent
Even if gold is bought and treated in fire
It will not carry blemishes (impurities)

Even if sugarcane is cut into bits
It will not leave its sweetness
You may bring all my sins of past
before me
But then it is a loss for you alone
Oh father! chennamallikarjuna
even if you kill me, I will not
stop coming to your refuge.

29

Oh! charming parrots
Have you seen? have you seen
Singing in high pitch, oh! cuckoo
Have you seen? have you seen?
Buzzing bees
have you seen? have you seen?
Oh! swans playing the shores
of ponds
Have you seen? have you seen?
Oh! peacocks! dancing around
Hills and caves
Have you seen? have you seen?
Tell me where is my chenmamallikarjuna?

30

Oh Guru! Freed me from the human birth
bestowed divine birth
I salute to you.
Oh Guru! freed me from the fetters of bhava
Showed me ultimate happiness, I salute to you
Oh Guru! you erased the name of Bhavi
and bestowed the name Bhakthe I salute to you
Oh Guru? you are the one who secured
Chennamallikarjuna for me, I salute to you

31

It is like treasure under earth
It is like taste hidden in fruit
It is like gold hidden in stone
It is like grease hidden in til
It is like fire hidden in tree
Brahma is hidden in thought
Chennamallikarjuna it is not easy
to know your existence.

32

When body assumed your form
whom shall I do?
when mind assumed your form
whom shall I think?
when my life assumed your form
whom shall I worship?
when my knowledge was absorbed
in you

Whom shall I understand?
Chennamallikarjuna since you are formed
I was trying to know you from yourself.

33

Is it not enough if you are liked
by one among five sense organs?
Is it not enough if you are liked
by one among seven habits
The fetters may be of gems
Will that free us chennamallikarjuna?
Hades (patal) here feet there
Ten directions here ten shoulders there
Brahmananda here gemmed crown there

Chennamallikarjuna, you belittled
Yourself coming to my palm?

35

Maya is before man in the form of woman.
Maya is before woman in the form of man
In the eyes of Maya, of the world,
the behaviour of saranas look strange
Saranas bestowed with love of chennamallikarjuna
are not haunted by maya, pride
and forgetfulness.

36

Will the barren woman know the pains of labour?
Will the step mother know the affection?
Will those know the sufferings, who have not
suffered?
Oh mothers! how can you know the
pain caused by the dagger of chennamallikarjuna

37

Though feel free from maya, maya will not free me
Maya accompanied yogi as yogini
Maya accompanied savana as savanathi
Maya accompanied yati as paraki
I swear chennamallikarjuna, I will
not be threatened by your Maya

38

People say, mountain has no dampness
how can then trees grow?
People say no fluid in coal
how can Iron melt then?
People say I have no body (kaya)
How can then I love chennamallikarjuna?

Once company of Bhavi given up
It is a hell for Bhaktha to go again
into Bhavi's company
Once sarana sati accepts linga as pati
Sarana will suffer hell if goes to sati again
Chenmamallikarjuna friendship
with those who have not given up
mortal character, is destructive

40

Pearl is from water, hail stone is from water
Salt is from water.
But salt melts hail stone also melts
but none has seen the pearl melting
Human beings of this world
touched Linga, became burdened with bhava.
But chennamallikarjuna, I touched you and melted.

41

Touching the root of Mooladhara
reached 'Bhroo' mandala
holding the root of Achara, reached
the summit of Aaikya
climbing the steps of vairagya
climbed the sreegiri
chennamallikarjuna, hold my
hand and take me to you

42

Linga worshipper will get the grant of vow but not Linga!
Dharma thyagis (those who give up religion) will get Naraka (hell) but not Linga

Those rich with vairagya ascetism will get
Salvation but not Linga!
(enlightened will get paribhramana
but not Linga!
Let the feeling of oneness dawn
On me and realise the self oh!
Chennamallikarjuna

43

I say no linga or lingaikya, I say no
sanga or samarasya
I say no to yes; no to no; I say
no to you, no to me
Chennamallikarjuna, when I am
in th communion of Linga
I say no to anything.

44

Sun is the seed of all activities of the world
mind is the seed of all temptations of Karanas
I have only one mind
That mind is planted in you
Hence I have no fear of this Bhava,
chennamallikarjuna

45

Living in the world I lived worldly
Having a body moved bodily
To look at I was extrovert but I was
introvert within
I cannot be twisted since I am a
burnt rope
Oh chenna mallikarjuna
I lived one in hundred
like a lotus in water

46

You are present in the entire forest
you are present in the trees of forest
you are present in all creatures and birds
 playing on trees
Chennamallikarjuna, though you are
 present every where
Why dont you show me your face?

47

Vedas, sastras, puranas are all
pounded and beaten husk
Why do you pound and beat them?
If you sever the head of the mind which
strays here and there
Chennamallikarjuna It is just void
and nothing else.

48

Dont you know kala (Yama) ignoring
Shiva turned into ashes
Dont you know Kama, ignoring shiva
was burnt
Dont you know Brahma lost his head
Ignoring shiva
Oh fool! dont you, you will suffer and
bhava will be hell for you, if you
ignore the feet of chennamallikarjuna

49

Lo! slightest suffering of Shivabhakthas
Shiva will suffer
Lo! If shiva bhakthas feel happy
Shiva will feel happy
Lo! shrutis say that shiva belongs to Bakthas

Lo! all virtues and vices, hence reach shiva
As the child in the womb suffers pain when mother
suffers
Chennamallikarjuna also suffers when his Bhakthas
suffer.

50

Being a good lady I will bathe you
Being calm I will worship you
I will sing for you with samarathi
Chennamallikarjuna, now I have the opportunity to
worship without leaving you

51

Once the fruit is eaten who bothers
about who cuts the tree!
Once a woman is deserted, who bothers
about who enjoys her!
Once land is abandoned, who bothers
about who tills the land!
Once enlightened of chennamallikarjuna
who bothers about; whether dog eats
or water drowns?

52

If one can play the serpent; teeth extracted
It is better be in the company of serpent
If relationship with kaya (body)
could be explained
It is better to be in relation with it
Kaya vikara is like mother devil
Chennamallikarjuna, dont say they
were with kaya.



And all these things shall come upon you
as the thief in the night, for ye know not
the day nor the hour when the Son of
Man shall come.

25


Ye shall also be hated of every man, brother,
and sister, and kindred, because of the name
of the Son of Man. Whoso loveth his father
or mother more than me, he shall not be
my disciple.

26

Whoso hateth his father, and his mother,
and his kindred, and himself, and
cometh to me, I will take him to my
disciples. Whoso cometh to me, and
hath not the cross, he shall not be
my disciple. Whoso cometh to me,
and will not deny himself, he shall not
be my disciple.

27

Whoso cometh to me, and will not
deny himself, he shall not be my
disciple. Whoso cometh to me,
and will not deny himself, he shall
not be my disciple. Whoso cometh
to me, and will not deny himself,
he shall not be my disciple.



Oh Lord! whether you listen or not
I can't resist but sing


Oh! Lord whether you see or not
I cannot bear but see you with
Cheers and wish.

Oh! Lord whether you like or not
I cannot bear but embrace you

Oh! Lord. whether you love or not
I cannot but worship you

Chennamallikarjuna

I worship and swim deep in happiness.



Basava Samithi

Sri Basaveshwara Circle, Bangalore-560 001
Ph: 22265505. E-mail: info@basavasamithi.org